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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Monday, October 26, 1936

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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "FOOD AND DRUG NEWS." Items of interest to women from the Federal Food and Drug Administration, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Do women like to be fooled?

Evidently some of them do, states our correspondent with the Federal Food and Drug Administration. Otherwise, she asks, why -- after repeated warnings from Federal officials -- why do women fall for worthless and dangerous reducing preparations, and so-called "slenderizing lotions."

"The latest lotion I've heard about," she writes, "was the property of a lady who had recently acquired some insurance money. Let's call her Mrs. X. Mrs. X bought the lotion from a Doctor -- Well, let's call him Doctor Y. Doctor Y 'discovered' the slenderizing lotion. He sold Mrs. X the right to handle the preparation in a particular territory, where she planned to open a slenderizing salon, or studio. The lotion sold for the very special price of \$40 a gallon -- if the purchaser bought 50 gallons at a time. Fifty gallons times \$40 equals two thousand dollars. That was the very special price for people who bought the lotion in quantities. For those who bought less than 50 gallons at one time the price was considerably more.

"Now according to Mrs. X, the slenderizing lotion would remove fat from any portion of the body to which it was applied. Indeed, according to Mrs. X, care must be taken not to apply the lotion to any part of the body where slenderness was not desired.

"But the plans of mice and men -- and ladies who buy exclusive rights to sell slenderizing lotions -- 'gang aft a-gley.' Mrs. X submitted a small sample of the magic fluid to Food and Drug officers. They were not greatly impressed by the extravagant claims made for the lotion. They had seen many a similar fraud in their time. After a few simple tests, the officials found that the preparation was nothing more than a water solution of epsom salts. Will anybody willing to pay \$40 a gallon for a weak solution of epsom salts please raise her right hand?"

..... Well..... our correspondent will surely be disappointed if she thinks anybody in this particular territory is interested in epsom salts at \$40 a gallon. After all, regular listeners to this series of programs have heard too many reports on fraudulent and worthless and dangerous reducing preparations to be taken in by "slenderizing lotions" at \$40 a gallon.



10/26/36

And speaking of reducing preparations, the other day I read a magazine item in regard to dinitrophenol (dye-nye-tro-fee-nol) -- one of the dangerous drugs often found in reducing preparations. The item was an answer to a question from a reader, about dinitrophenol capsules for weight reduction, and whether they are the cause of eye cataract. But I'll read the answer:

"It is only a year since it was recognized that in human beings dinitrophenol was likely to cause cataract. The only sure remedy is not to take dinitrophenol. To be sure of this, you have to avoid giving or taking drugs for weight reduction, and fall back on diet and exercise to keep down weight. Dinitrophenol is rapidly acquiring a bad reputation for causing cataract. So people will not take it under that name. But under any other name it will be just as dangerous, and scores of names can be invented for weight reducers in which it can be used, and thus sold like other 'patent medicines'.

"If one should unwisely decide to try dinitrophenol, or some proprietary medicine that may contain it, and later think better of it and stop taking the medicine, the cataract may still come on. Dinitrophenol seems to injure the capsule of the crystalline lens of the eye, or the epithelium just under the capsule. After that, the lens becomes opaque, and a cataract forms. Dinitrophenol has been tried on rabbits and dogs without causing cataract. But enough human beings have tried it to make sure that dinitrophenol is likely to cause cataract, even in early life; and that often the cataract comes on and increases very rapidly."

Well, those are the facts, my friends, the grim and oft-repeated facts about such dangerous drugs as dinitrophenol, which federal Food and Drug officials say should never be used except on the advice of a physician.

As our correspondent has mentioned before, the Food and Drug Administration has a list of some of the names under which fat-reducing preparations containing dinitrophenol have been or are now being sold. If you want this list, write to the Food and Drug Administration, Washington, D. C., and ask for information on weight-reducers containing dinitrophenol -- spelled dinitro-phenol.

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